

Message to the Congress Transmitting the Executive Order Blocking
Property of Certain Persons and Prohibiting the Export of Certain Goods
to Syria

May 11, 2004

To the Congress of the United States:

Consistent with subsection 204(b) of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act, 50 U.S.C. 1703(b) (IEEPA), and section 301 of the National Emergencies Act, 50 U.S.C. 1631, I hereby report that I have issued an Executive Order (order) in which I declared a national emergency with respect to the threat constituted by certain actions of the Government of Syria. Further, in accordance with subsection 5(b) of the Syria Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act of 2003 (SAA), Public Law 108-175, this message also constitutes the report on my exercise of the waiver authority pursuant to that statute.

On December 12, 2003, I signed into law the SAA in order to strengthen the ability of the United States to effectively confront the threat to U.S. national security posed by Syria's support for terrorism, its military presence in Lebanon, its pursuit of weapons of mass destruction, and its actions to undermine U.S. and international efforts with respect to the stabilization and reconstruction of Iraq. These policies by the Government of Syria directly threaten regional stability and undermine the U.S. goal of a comprehensive Middle East peace. Despite many months of diplomatic efforts to convince the Government of Syria to change its behavior, Syria has not taken significant, concrete steps to address the full range of U.S. concerns, which were clearly conveyed by Secretary of State Powell to Syrian President Asad in May 2003. I find the actions, policies, and circumstances described above sufficiently grave to constitute a threat to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States, and thus have declared a national emergency to address that threat.

In implementation of subsection 5(a) of the SAA, in the order I directed that action be taken to prohibit the export to Syria of products of the United States other than food and medicine, including but not limited to items on the United States Munitions List or Commerce Control List, and I prohibited commercial air services between Syria and the United States by aircraft of any air carrier owned or controlled by Syria, as well as certain non-traffic stops by such aircraft.

It is important to the national security interests of the United States, however, that certain discrete categories of exports continue in order to support activities of the United States Government and United Nations agencies, to facilitate travel by United States persons, for certain humanitarian purposes, to help maintain aviation safety, and to promote the exchange of information. Also, it is important to U.S. national security interests that aviation-related sanctions take into account humanitarian and diplomatic concerns as well as the international obligations of the United States.

Accordingly, I have waived the application of subsections 5(a)(1) and 5(a)(2)(A) of the SAA to permit the export and reexport of: products in support of activities of the United States Government to the extent that such exports would not otherwise fall within my constitutional authority to conduct the Nation's foreign affairs and protect national security; medicines on the Commerce Control List and medical devices; aircraft parts and components for purposes of flight safety; exports and reexports consistent with the 5(a)(2)(D) waiver outlined below; information and informational materials, as well as telecommunications equipment and associated items to

promote the free flow of information; certain software and technology; products in support of United Nations operations; and, certain exports and reexports of a temporary nature. These items are further identified in the Department of Commerce's General Order No. 2, as issued consistent with my order. I have also waived the application of subsection 5(a)(2)(D) to permit the following with respect to aircraft of any air carrier owned or controlled by Syria: takeoffs or landings of such aircraft when chartered by the Government of Syria to transport Syrian gov-

ernment officials to the United States on official Syrian government business; takeoffs or landings for non-traffic stops of such aircraft that are not engaged in scheduled international air services; takeoffs and landings associated with an emergency; and overflights of U.S. territory.

GEORGE W. BUSH

The White House,
May 11, 2004.

NOTE: The Executive order is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks on the Death of Nicholas Berg May 12, 2004

I want to express my condolences to the family and friends of Nicholas Berg. Nicholas Berg was an innocent civilian who was in Iraq to help build a free Iraq. There is no justification for the brutal execution of Nicholas Berg—no justification whatsoever.

The actions of the terrorists who executed this man remind us of the nature of the few people who want to stop the advance of freedom in Iraq. Their intention is to shake our will. Their intention is to shake our confidence. Yet, by their actions,

they remind us of how desperately parts of the world need free societies and peaceful societies, and we will complete our mission. We will complete our task.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House prior to his departure for Bethesda, MD. American hostage Nicholas Berg was killed in Iraq in early May by senior Al Qaida associate Abu Musab Al Zarqawi.

Remarks in a Discussion on Education at the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, Maryland May 12, 2004

The President. Thanks, Reid. Thank you all for coming. What he forgot to tell you is, I've known Reid for a long time. See, when I was the Governor of Texas, I was worried that we weren't using a curriculum, a reading curriculum that would work. So I said to Margaret Spellings, who is my

Domestic Policy Adviser here in Washington, I said, "Who's the best in the country about figuring out how to teach children how to read?" And they said, "Reid Lyon." I said, "Okay, get him up here," or "Get him down here," in this case. He was here